



# WiLearn

## WiLearn Frequently Asked Questions: Updated September 2022

### Question 1: What is WiLearn?

**Answer:** WiLearn is a training program for new child protective services (CPS) professionals in Wisconsin and will be required for all new employees whose primary functions include access, initial assessment, ongoing services, or a mixture of those practice areas; other non-CPS professionals may benefit from some of the WiLearn program, as well. WiLearn utilizes a cohort model so learners within the same cohort go through the training program together. WiLearn takes advantage of enhanced technologies to allow new CPS professionals to complete all the training program virtually, with much of it on their own time.

Much of a learner's time will be spent on eight Foundational Elements which are comprised of synchronous classroom-style learning paired with asynchronous learning activities and courses learners will complete on their own. Aside from the Foundational Elements, WiLearn also includes agency-specific trainings and onboarding activities, including structured supervisory coaching and mentoring opportunities, Case Worker Pre-Service and eWiSACWIS web-based modules. DCF is consulting with local CPS agency leadership on prioritizing participation in the current safety foundation trainings in addition to the WiLearn program.

### Question 2: What is the difference between WiLearn and Foundations?

**Answer:** WiLearn is a new model of training that looks and feels different than the current Foundation trainings. Foundational Elements have been organized into a sequential order with each element building off the one before. The WiLearn training program offers a uniform experience for learners as new CPS professionals receive the same information in the same order across the state.

Training content that presently exists within the current Foundation courses is being repurposed and transposed into the Foundational Elements contained within the WiLearn training program. Throughout 2022 and beyond, DCF and WCWPDS will collaborate to make updates to this content to reflect current and future revisions to standards, policies, and language.



### **Question 3: What are the Foundational Elements?**

**Answer:** The Foundational Elements are built around learning priorities identified by DCF and local CPS agency leaders and address the following areas:

1. Culturally Responsible Practice in Child Welfare
2. Trauma Informed Practice
3. Understanding the CPS Case Process
4. Engaging Families
5. Case Practice with American Indian Tribes
6. Areas of Assessment in CPS
7. Critical Thinking in CPS
8. Family Centered Decision Making

Learners will experience these elements together and in this order, virtually, utilizing both synchronous and asynchronous training modalities. These specific Foundational Elements will account for 42 hours (or 7 days) of training content that will be completed within a new CPS professional's first six (6) months of employment. Generally, the content for these elements comes directly from existing foundation courses.

### **Question 4: What is happening to content in Foundations that is not included in WiLearn?**

**Answer:** Not every piece of content within the existing Foundation courses will be included within the Foundational Elements in WiLearn. Content that is not covered in WiLearn will temporarily be offered in its current format. Starting in 2023, WCWPDS will begin working on transitioning the remaining foundation courses into a format similar to the format utilized for Foundational Elements in the WiLearn program and that leverage the instruction related to the remaining foundation course content.

### **Question 5: How is safety assessment and planning attended to in WiLearn given the significant work currently underway to identify and improve our state's safety decision-making model?**

**Answer:** Improvements to Wisconsin's Safety Model are underway and there will be changes to policy and practice and downstream changes to safety training requirements. DCF and WCWPDS are working collaboratively to ensure that WiLearn content does not create inconsistencies between current and future curriculum.



However, critical thinking skills related to safety assessment and planning practices will be introduced in WiLearn to start building a strong foundation of competence and confidence in safety practice as a starting point. However, safety decision making is a complex process and will require more specific and detailed training in order to afford new professionals opportunities for skill building and application. As indicated above, during 2022 the current safety foundation courses will be used to support the continued and advanced learning related to this highly important practice area; while new CPS professionals will continue to be required to complete these additional courses within two years of their employment, DCF and WCWPDS will make every effort to ensure these courses are available to new CPS professionals concurrent to or shortly following a completion of the WiLearn program.

**Question 6: Are there any new requirements for new CPS professionals while they are enrolled in WiLearn? If so, what are they?**

**Answer:** Yes. New CPS professionals are expected to have no more than 50% of a *typical* caseload that is held by a Primary Worker in eWiSACWIS during their time completing the 6-month WiLearn program.

**Question 7: What is being considered a 50% caseload and how is that being determined?**

**Answer:** DCF defines a typical caseload as 14 primary case assignments for both Initial Assessment and Ongoing Services. Therefore, the expectation is that new staff enrolled in WiLearn receive up to 7 (50% of 14) primary case assignments at any given time. Please note this requirement pertains to new CPS professionals whose primary case responsibilities are Initial Assessment, Ongoing Services, or a mixture of those two practice areas.

**Question 8: What happens if new CPS professionals are assigned a primary caseload that is higher than 50%?**

**Answer:** DCF will be following federal guidance regarding WiLearn which is considered to be "intensive training" which is defined as "highly concentrated and intended to significantly strengthen and increase the employee's knowledge. Given these parameters, an employee could not participate in intensive training while maintaining a full caseload."

Using its available statewide information systems, including eWiSACWIS data, DCF will monitor caseload to monitor new CPS professionals' primary case assignments and to determine if a caseload is under, meets, or exceeds the 50% threshold.



**Question 9: Are there any exemptions that can be made for the WiLearn requirements?**

**Answer:** Yes. There may be situations in which it makes sense to grant exemptions to completing the WiLearn program and to its requirements (e.g., new caseworker who is experienced in child welfare in another state or county). Exemptions should be considered and analyzed on a case-by-case basis and are identified in the training rule (Administrative Code Chapter DCF 43) as being at the discretion of the employing agency. Reasons for the exemption must include that the new CPS professional or supervisor has completed the required core training components at a different time or location and the provides the employing agency with documentation of having completed that training.

**Question 10: How do staff in WiLearn make up for missed Foundational Elements?**

**Answer:** As the Foundational Elements are all designed to build off each other, missing an entire element will cause a significant disruption in the learning process. New CPS professionals who miss an entire Foundational Element will be transferred into the next available cohort at the same spot in the Foundational Element process that they were unable to complete in their original cohort. If a professional misses a portion of a Foundational Element, efforts will be made to determine a manner in which the professional is able to remain with the original cohort. Those situations will be determined on a case-by-case basis due to the number of variables involved.

**Question 11: Are there any additional requirements for new CPS professionals other than completing WiLearn within their first 6 months?**

**Answer:** Yes. WiLearn is not intended to be the only training that a new CPS professional completes. There are additional foundation training requirements and other training that may be required by statute or policy or based on job roles. Other trainings will continue to be offered and agencies can still send staff as needed or as required by statute, policy, or job role.

DCF is consulting with local CPS agency leadership on prioritizing remaining foundation training following completion of WiLearn.

**Question 12: Can new CPS professionals take other WCWPDS trainings during WiLearn?**



**Answer:** Yes. New professionals may sign up and attend other WCWPDS trainings as deemed appropriate by the CPS professional and agency. This can be done at any point, even while going through WiLearn, as time permits.

**Question 13: Could you elaborate on “additional supervisor oversight?”**

**Answer:** Any of the “supervisor” tasks can be completed by a supervisor, lead worker, designated staff, trainer, or other individuals as your agency sees fit. Enhanced supervisory oversight refers to consistent and dedicated “check-in” times between the new CPS professional and supervisor to enhance the learner’s transfer of learning between classroom work and the field. These check-ins are recommended to take place at a minimum weekly and will complement other activities specific to WiLearn and that are arranged by the agency to support learning.

**Question 14: How will I be prepared for these changes prior to implementation?**

**Answer:** Training guides will be available for agencies to use as a reference as needed. These guides are currently in development and will be made available prior to the implementation of the WiLearn program. This will include a Learning Promotion tool that will contain all the behavioral outcomes and indicators for each foundational element expected at the completion of the WiLearn Program.

A new training, “Coaching: Bridging the Gap Between Training and Practice,” will be available to supervisors, lead workers, or any designated staff trainer who is or will be in the position of supporting new CPS professionals through the WiLearn program.

**Question 15: How do my staff sign up for WiLearn?**

**Answer:** New CPS professionals will be proxy enrolled in a cohort shortly after hire/employment/start date. This automation is very similar to how enrollment in Basic Intake Training currently exists. Once new CPS professionals are signed up for an eWiSACWIS account, PDS is notified and automatically enrolls all staff who have a primary function of access, initial assessment, ongoing, or some combination of those practice areas.

**Question 16: How often will new cohorts be formed?**



**Answer:** Wisconsin has approximately 300 new CPS Access, IA & Ongoing Service professionals that begin their employment each year. WCWPDS is planning for 15 cohorts per year with the first one scheduled for February 2023. It is expected a new cohort will start every 3-4 weeks thereafter.

**Question 17: When should staff stop signing up for Foundation courses and start signing up for WiLearn?**

**Answer:** Please continue to sign up your new CPS professionals for Foundation training through November 2022. December 2022 will be a transition month where you will have the option of having new CPS professionals complete WiLearn with the first cohort in 2023 or complete the current foundation trainings as currently structured (15 days of training over the first two years with required and menu option choices). Starting on January 2, 2023, all new CPS professionals will be automatically enrolled into WiLearn.

**Question 18: What should staff who are currently going through the Foundation trainings do after January 2023?**

**Answer:** Staff who are signed up and/or have started Foundations should continue with Foundations. Those staff will not be enrolled in WiLearn and will complete their remaining trainings as they exist now.

**Question 19: Can Youth Justice professionals, tribal child welfare professionals, and others who are not required to take WiLearn still access the content?**

**Answer:** Yes. Non-CPS professionals who are not required to go through all of WiLearn may still access the content provided through this program. The Pre-Service and eWiSACWIS web-based modules will continue to be accessible as they are today, and it is anticipated that each of the Foundational Elements involved in the WiLearn program will also be offered individually for staff who are not new CPS Access, IA or Ongoing Service professionals. These stand-alone elements will be rolled out in mid-2023 and professionals will be able to register for them through their PDS Online account.

**Question 20: Can I experience the Foundational Elements so that I know what my staff are being trained on and can best support them?**



**Answer:** Yes. As stated above, the WiLearn Foundational Elements will be available as stand-alone elements and supervisors may register for them through their PDS Online account when they become available.



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